Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman,

who is also the ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee and

obviously, very, very passionate and articulate on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents know that I vote my conscience. I voted

against my party and our President when I thought that they were wrong.

I have stood up to my leadership when my constituents knew Congress

could do better.

But, Mr. Speaker, my vote on the resolution before us isn't about my

party or about the President. Unfortunately, this vote and this debate

is all about politics and providing some political cover. This vote

does nothing to help our soldiers win. What I see here is this liberal

leadership pandering to the vitriolic left wing of the Democrat Party.

How do I know this?

At the opening of this debate, Speaker Pelosi asked the only real

relevant question: Will this resolution make our troops safer? In her

remarks, and I have read and reread them, she didn't say how her

resolution did that. I have pored over the remarks and the text of this

resolution to find all the instances where the House will be giving

greater resources to the troops, and it doesn't.

After I read all 60 words many, many times, I can tell you, not one

single word in the resolution offers any more equipment, not any more

diplomacy, or any more security for our troops.

And guess what?

It also does not bring one soldier home sooner. It doesn't demand the

Iraqis take the lead in the fight. These omissions make it startlingly

clear to me that the answer to Speaker Pelosi's questions, will this

resolution make our troops safer, is absolutely no, it will not.

The Democrats have this resolution all wrong. To be more specific,

there is not a single mention in this resolution of how we will send

more body armor for the troops, not a single mention of new tools to

detect IED explosives, not one word dedicated to up-armored Humvees,

and, Mr. Speaker, not one mention of the method to fund the health care

needs of those veterans who will come home. Not one word.

I invite the Speaker to come back into the Chamber and tell this

House where is the additional money to make our soldiers safer and our

Army stronger, because if she can't show me the substance in these 60

words, then they are nothing but rhetoric, and this resolution cannot

and will not help our troops.

This week the House is debating a useless resolution that's only

purpose is to weaken and divide. The American people are not stupid.

They can see through this charade for exactly what it is. It is a

toothless effort to provide political cover for Democrats.

As a matter of fact, the Orlando Sentinel, certainly not a

conservative newspaper, has said that this is an empty measure. It says

the pointless House Resolution on Iraq fails to set goals. It goes on

to say, The U.S. House launched a welcome debate this week on the Iraq

war. It is too bad 3 days of points and counterpoints will end in a

vote on a pointless resolution. This isn't thoughtless policy, it is

political cover.

Believe me, the Orlando Sentinel is, by far, not a very conservative

newspaper.

My constituents know that over these 3 days we have debated a

resolution with no teeth, no enforcement, and it is delivered in a way

that has no guts, no character and provides no leadership.

Mr. Speaker, if this debate were about policy, we would be talking

about changing or creating law. If the Democrats believed what they

were saying, this House would be debating spending and funding, not

wasteful rhetoric. If my colleagues on the other side of the aisle were

genuine, we would be talking about benchmarks for Iraq, the Iraqi

Government, and strict guidelines for appropriations.

I have heard some on the other side of the aisle say that this debate

is about preventing an escalation. Is the Democrat majority so

powerless that it cannot stop a deployment?

Before I got elected, Congress authorized this war, and with the

force of law, this Congress could stop it. Congress' concern should be

for our troops, not the Presidential and political ambitions of the

Democrat Party.

It is rare when I stand on the floor and say that the Senate actually

got it right, but I must commend them for their more thoughtful and

less politically attuned resolution, because their resolution states

the long-term security interests of the United States are best served

by an Iraq that can sustain, govern and defend itself and serve as an

ally in the war against extremists. That statement acknowledges the

battle that we are waging and the eventual victory that we must achieve

in the Middle East.

The 60-word resolution before this Chamber makes no such statement or

recognition and sets absolutely no benchmarks.

My sole concern is for our troops. The litmus test for my vote is

whether or not this resolution makes our troops safer.

Mr. Speaker, I believe every Member of this House should ask

themselves the following questions:

Will this resolution protect one of our soldiers?

Will this resolution make one piece of armor thicker?

Will these empty words make a single IED less lethal?

Will this resolution stop one sniper or one suicide bomber from

attacking our troops in the field?

Sadly, the answer is no. This resolution is not being debated in a

vacuum.

We must ask the question, Could this resolution encourage our

adversaries?

Could this debate put one of our soldiers in further harm's way?

Might some Islamic terrorist believe that the more of our troops that

they kill, the quicker the U.S. will withdraw our forces?

If the answer to these questions is even possibly ``maybe,'' then I

cannot vote for this resolution. We should not risk encouraging those

who would attack our troops just for the empty gesture of partisanship.

Let's call this for what it is. This resolution puts our troops at

risk for the Presidential aspirations of some Members of the opposite

party.

Many Members have noticed that on the 11th day of every month I wear

this pin. This was given to me by firefighters. It is a depiction of

firefighters

putting up our flag in New York City after it was attacked. This is why

we have very brave young men and women out there fighting today.

I am not a blind supporter of the President's policies. And if we

wanted to make this debate about policy, I would be there to work with

them.

The President knows all well my strong reservations about some of the

policies in Iraq. But, Mr. Speaker, it has not been a perfect war.

I stand here today to let our troops know that I will hold the

President's feet to the fire to ensure that our soldiers have the tools

for our victory. That is what our soldiers want.

In the South, we have a wonderful saying and it goes like this: ``Git

'er done.'' Our soldiers want to get it done and come home. And our

President wants the same thing. And this Congress should also demand

the exact same thing. Let's get out there and ``Git 'er done.''